GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1649
ANSWERED ON:01.12.2006
UNDP REPORT ON WATER AND SANITATION
Bhakta Shri Manoranjan

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a)Whether the report of UNDP on water and sanitation has been received by the Government ;

(b) If so, the details thereof ;

(c)Whether there is a need to take up special measures to achieve targets fixed by the Government; and

(d) If so, the details thereof ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT(SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Some salient observations made in the report are:

1. The scarcity at the heart of the global water crisis is rooted in power, poverty and inequality, not in physical availability ;

2. There is more than enough water in the world for domestic purposes, for agriculture and for industry. The problem is that some people − notably the poor − are systematically excluded ;

3.Ensuring that every person has access to at least 20 litres of clean water each day is a minimum requirement for respecting the human right to water ;

4. `Not having access` to water and sanitation is a polite euphemism for a form of deprivation that threatens life, destroys opportunity and undermines human dignity ;

5. Water and sanitation are among the most power preventive medicines available to governments to reduce infectious disease ;

6. Almost two in three people lacking access to clean water and more than 660 million people without sanitation live on less than $2 a day ;

7. What is needed in the decade ahead is a concerted international drive starting with nationally owned strategies, but incorporating a global action plan ;

8. Poor people get less access to clean water and pay more for it ;

9. The criterion for assessing policy should not be public or private but performance or non-performance for the poor ;

10. Progress depends on setting attainable targets in national plans that are backed by financing provisions and strategies for overcoming inequality ;

11. Even more than water, sanitation suffers from a combination of institutional fragmentation, weak national planning and low political status ;

12. Community led initiatives are important, but they are not a substitute for government action − and private financing by poor households is not a substitute for public finance and service provision ;

13. Scarcity has been induced by policy failures − when it comes to water management, the world has been indulging in any activity analogous to a reckless and unsustainable credit financed spending spree ;

14. Climate change is transforming the nature of global water insecurity ;

15. International aid for adaptation ought to be a cornerstone of the multilateral framework for dealing with climate change ;

16. Outcomes for the poorest, most vulnerable people in society will be determined by the way institutions mediate and manage rival claims − and by whether governments put equity concerns at the centre of national policies ;

17. One lesson from water reforms is that far more weight needs to be attached to equity. The fear that Transboundary competition will become a source of conflict and future water wars is exaggerated; cooperation remains a far more pervasive fact of life than conflict ;

18. Transboundary water governance is a human development issue: cooperation can reduce the potential for conflict and unlock benefits by improving the quality of share water, generating prosperity and more secure livelihoods ;

19. Unclean water and poor sanitation have claimed more lives over the past century than any other cause.

(c & d) Government is taking adequate measures to achieve the targets fixed. Drinking Water Supply is one of the six components of Bharat Nirman which has been conceived as a plan to be implemented in four years, from 2005-06 to 2008-09 for building rural infrastructure. The objective of the said component is `Every habitation to have a safe source of drinking water: 55067 uncovered habitations to be covered by 2009. In addition, all habitations which have slipped back from full coverage to partial coverage due to failure of source and habitations which have water quality problems to be addressed.` State wise action plans have been made for the same. Focused funding is being done to address the problem of chemical contamination and a new program for water quality surveillance & monitoring has been introduced to involve community participation in maintaining quality standards.

The Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) is going on as a demand driven, community led and people centered scheme. The TSC is currently running in 569 districts of the country with the aim to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2010 and Universal access to toilet in rural areas by 2012. Unit cost for Individual Household Latrines (IHHL) has been revised recently. Nirmal Gram Puraskar has been introduced to encourage Panchayati Raj Institutions to attain open defecation free status in panchayat. Coverage has also increased to 40% from 22% in 2001.